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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 19 December 2016

[*on the report of the Third Committee (A/71/477)*]

71/168. Intensifying global efforts for the elimination of female genital mutilation

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 53/117 of 9 December 1998, 56/128 of 19 December 2001, 67/146 of 20 December 2012, 68/146 of 18 December 2013 and 69/150 of 18 December 2014, Commission on the Status of Women resolutions 51/2 of 9 March 2007,[1] 52/2 of 7 March 2008[2] and 54/7 of 12 March 2010[3] and Human Rights Council resolutions 27/22 of 26 September 2014[4] and 32/21 of 1 July 2016,[5] and all relevant agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women,

Reaffirming the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[6]

Reaffirming also that the Convention on the Rights of the Child[7] and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,[8] and all the relevant conventions, together with the optional protocols thereto, as appropriate, constitute an important contribution to the legal framework for the protection and promotion of the human rights of women and girls,

Reaffirming further the Beijing Declaration[9] and Platform for Action,[10] the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first

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[1] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2007, Supplement No. 7* (E/2007/27), chap. I, sect. D.

[2] Ibid., *2008, Supplement No. 7* (E/2008/27), chap. I, sect. D.

[3] Ibid., *2010, Supplement No. 7* and corrigendum (E/2010/27 and Corr.1), chap. I, sect. D.

[4] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 53A* and corrigenda (A/69/53/Add.1 and Corr.1 and 2), chap. IV, sect. A.

[5] Ibid., *Seventy-first Session, Supplement No. 53* (A/71/53), chap. V, sect. A.

[6] Resolution 217 A (III).

[7] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1577, No. 27531.

[8] Ibid., vol. 1249, No. 20378.

[9] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[10] Ibid., annex II.

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century",[11] the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development[12] and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development[13] and their 5-, 10-, 15- and 20-year reviews, as well as the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[14] and the commitments relevant to women and girls made at the 2005 World Summit[15] and reiterated in Assembly resolution 65/1 of 22 September 2010, entitled "Keeping the promise: united to achieve the Millennium Development Goals", and those made in the outcome document of the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development",[16]

Recognizing the role of regional and subregional instruments and mechanisms in the prevention and elimination of female genital mutilation, where they exist,

Recalling the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, adopted in Maputo on 11 July 2003, which contains, inter alia, undertakings and commitments on ending female genital mutilation and marks a significant milestone towards the elimination and ending of female genital mutilation,

Recalling also the decision of the African Union, adopted in Malabo on 1 July 2011, to support the adoption by the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session of a resolution banning female genital mutilation,

Recalling further the recommendation of the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-sixth session that the Economic and Social Council recommend to the General Assembly the adoption of a decision to consider the issue of ending female genital mutilation at its sixty-seventh session under the item entitled "Advancement of women",[17]

Recognizing that female genital mutilation constitutes irreparable, irreversible harm and an act of violence against women and girls that impairs their human rights, and recognizing also that it affects about 200 million women and girls worldwide and that each year an estimated further 4 million girls are at risk of being subjected to the practice throughout the world, which can be an impediment to the full achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls,

Reaffirming that female genital mutilation is a harmful practice, constituting a serious threat to the health of women and girls, including their physical, mental, sexual and reproductive health, increasing their vulnerability to HIV, as well as hepatitis A and B, and possibly having adverse obstetric and prenatal outcomes, as well as fatal consequences for the mother and the newborn, and that the elimination of this harmful practice can be achieved as a result of a comprehensive movement that involves all public and private stakeholders in society, including girls and boys, women and men,

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[11] Resolution S-23/2, annex, and resolution S-23/3, annex.

[12] *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5–13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

[13] *Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6–12 March 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[14] Resolution 55/2.

[15] See resolution 60/1.

[16] Resolution 70/1.

[17] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2012, Supplement No. 7* and corrigendum (E/2012/27 and Corr.1), chap. I, sect. A.

Recognizing that female genital mutilation is inherently linked to deep-rooted, negative norms, stereotypes, perceptions and customs that are obstacles to the full enjoyment of human rights,

Concerned about evidence of an increase in the incidence of female genital mutilation being carried out by medical personnel in all regions in which it is practised,

Recognizing that negative discriminatory and stereotypical attitudes and behaviours have direct implications for the status and treatment of women and girls and that such negative stereotypes impede the implementation of legislative and normative frameworks that guarantee gender equality and prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex,

Stressing that men and boys play an important role in the acceleration of progress in preventing and eliminating harmful practices such as female genital mutilation by being agents of change,

Recognizing that the campaign of the Secretary-General entitled "UNiTE to End Violence against Women" and the Global Database on Violence against Women have contributed to addressing the elimination of female genital mutilation,

Welcoming the efforts of the United Nations system to end female genital mutilation, in particular the commitment of 10 United Nations entities,[18] announced in their joint inter-agency statement of 27 February 2008 on eliminating female genital mutilation, as well as the Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: Accelerating Change of the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Children's Fund, to accelerate the elimination of the practice,

Commending the continued efforts and actions undertaken by States, individually and collectively, regional organizations and United Nations agencies for the elimination of female genital mutilation as well as the implementation of its resolution 69/150,

Welcoming the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and underscoring the importance of its implementation with a view to eliminating female genital mutilation,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General,[19]

Deeply concerned that, despite the increase in national, regional and international efforts and the focus on the elimination of female genital mutilation, the practice continues to persist in all regions of the world and is often on the rise for migrant and refugee women and girls,

Deeply concerned also that a tremendous gap in resources continues to exist and that the shortfall in funding has severely limited the scope and pace of programmes and activities for the elimination of female genital mutilation,

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[18] Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, United Nations Development Programme, Economic Commission for Africa, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Population Fund, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Development Fund for Women and World Health Organization.

[19] A/71/209.

1. *Stresses* that the empowerment of women and girls is key to breaking the cycle of discrimination and violence and for the promotion and protection of human rights, including the right to the highest attainable standard of mental and physical health, including sexual and reproductive health, and calls upon States parties to fulfil their obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child[7] and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,[8] as well as their commitments to implement the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, [20] the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development,[12] the Beijing Platform for Action[10] and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century",[11] and of the special session of the General Assembly on children;[21]

2. *Calls upon* States to place a stronger focus on the development and implementation of comprehensive prevention strategies, including the enhancement of educational campaigns, awareness-raising and formal, non-formal and informal education and training in order to promote the direct engagement of girls and boys, women and men and to ensure that all key actors, government officials, including law enforcement and judicial personnel, immigration officials and parliamentarians, health-care providers, civil society, the private sector, community and religious leaders, teachers, employers, media professionals and those directly working with girls, as well as parents, families and communities, work to eliminate attitudes and harmful practices, in particular all forms of female genital mutilation, that negatively affect women and girls;

3. *Also calls upon* States to strengthen advocacy and awareness-raising programmes, to mobilize girls and boys to take an active part in developing preventive and elimination programmes to address harmful practices, especially female genital mutilation, and to engage families, local community and religious leaders, educational institutions, the media and civil society and provide increased financial support to efforts at all levels to end discriminatory social norms and practices;

4. *Urges* States to condemn all harmful practices that affect women and girls, in particular female genital mutilation, whether committed within or outside a medical institution, and to take all necessary measures, especially through educational campaigns, including enacting and enforcing legislation, to prohibit female genital mutilation and to protect women and girls from this form of violence, and to hold perpetrators to account;

5. *Also urges* States to complement punitive measures with awareness-raising and educational activities designed to promote a process of consensus towards the elimination of female genital mutilation, and further urges States to protect and support women and girls who have been subjected to female genital mutilation and those at risk, including by developing social and psychological support services and care and appropriate remedies, and to take measures to improve their health, including sexual and reproductive health, in order to assist women and girls who are subjected to the practice;

[20] Resolution 48/104.

[21] Resolution S-27/2, annex.

6. *Further urges* States to promote gender-sensitive, empowering educational processes by reviewing and revising, as appropriate, school curricula, educational materials and teacher-training programmes and elaborating policies and programmes of zero tolerance for violence against girls, including female genital mutilation, placing special emphasis on education about the harmful effects of female genital mutilation, and to further integrate a comprehensive understanding of the causes and consequences of gender-based violence and discrimination against women and girls into education and training curricula at all levels;

7. *Urges* States to ensure that the protection and provision of support to women and girls subject to, or at risk of, female genital mutilation are an integral part of policies and programmes that address the practice, and to provide women and girls with coordinated, specialized, accessible and quality multisectoral prevention and response, including education, as well as legal, psychological, health-care and social services, provided by qualified personnel, consistent with the guidelines of medical ethics;

8. *Calls upon* States to ensure that national action plans and strategies on the elimination of female genital mutilation are comprehensive and multidisciplinary in scope and that they include projected timelines for goals and incorporate clear targets and indicators for the effective monitoring, impact assessment and coordination of programmes among all relevant stakeholders and promote their participation, including the participation of affected groups, practising communities and non-governmental organizations, in the development, implementation and evaluation of such plans and strategies;

9. *Urges* States to take, within the general framework of integration policies and in consultation with affected communities, effective and specific targeted measures for refugee women and women migrants and their communities in order to protect girls from female genital mutilation, including when the practice occurs outside the country of residence;

10. *Calls upon* States to develop information and awareness-raising campaigns and programmes to systematically reach the general public, relevant professionals, families and communities, including through the media, featuring television and radio discussions about the harmful effect of female genital mutilation and the fact that this practice still exists, as well as about national and international levels of support for the elimination of female genital mutilation;

11. *Urges* States to pursue a comprehensive, culturally sensitive, systematic approach that incorporates a social perspective and is based on human rights and gender-equality principles in providing education and training to families, local community leaders and members of all professions relevant to the protection and empowerment of women and girls in order to increase awareness of and commitment to the elimination of female genital mutilation;

12. *Also urges* States to ensure the national implementation of international and regional commitments and obligations undertaken as States parties to various international instruments protecting the full enjoyment of all human rights and the fundamental freedoms of women and girls;

13. *Calls upon* States to develop policies and regulations to ensure the effective implementation of national legislative frameworks on eliminating discrimination and violence against women and girls, in particular female genital mutilation, and to put in place adequate accountability mechanisms at the national and local levels to monitor adherence to and implementation of those legislative frameworks;

14. *Also calls upon* States to develop unified methods and standards for the collection of data on all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls, especially forms that are underdocumented, harmful practices such as female genital mutilation, to develop additional indicators to effectively measure progress in eliminating the practice and to reinforce the sharing of good practices relating to the prevention and elimination of the practice at the subregional, regional and global levels;

15. *Urges* States to allocate sufficient resources to the implementation of policies and programmes and legislative frameworks aimed at eliminating female genital mutilation;

16. *Calls upon* States to develop, support and implement comprehensive and integrated strategies for the prevention of female genital mutilation, including the training of social workers, medical personnel, community and religious leaders and relevant professionals, and to ensure that they provide competent, supportive services and care to women and girls who are at risk of or who have undergone female genital mutilation and encourage them to report to the appropriate authorities cases in which they believe women or girls are at risk;

17. *Also calls upon* States to support, as part of a comprehensive approach to eliminate female genital mutilation, programmes that engage local community practitioners of female genital mutilation in community-based initiatives for the elimination of the practice, including, where relevant, the identification by communities of alternative livelihoods for them;

18. *Calls upon* the international community, the relevant United Nations entities and civil society and international financial institutions to continue to actively support, through the allocation of increased financial resources and technical assistance, targeted comprehensive programmes that address the needs and priorities of women and girls at risk of or subjected to female genital mutilation;

19. *Calls upon* the international community to strongly support, including through increased financial support, a third phase of the Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: Accelerating Change of the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Children's Fund, which will run until 2020, as well as national programmes focused on the elimination of female genital mutilation;

20. *Stresses* that some progress has been made in combating female genital mutilation in a number of countries using a common coordinated approach that promotes positive social change at the community, national, regional and international levels, and recalls the goal set out in the United Nations inter-agency statement that female genital mutilation is to be eliminated within a generation, with some of the main achievements being obtained by 2030, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals;

21. *Encourages* men and boys to take positive initiatives and to work in partnership with women and girls to combat violence and discriminatory practices against women and girls, in particular female genital mutilation, through networks, peer programmes, information campaigns and training programmes;

22. *Calls upon* States, the United Nations system, civil society and all stakeholders to continue to observe 6 February as the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation and to use the day to enhance awareness-raising campaigns and to take concrete actions against female genital mutilation;

23. *Calls upon* States to improve the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data and, where appropriate, to collaborate with existing data collection systems, which are crucial for evidence-based legal and policy development, programme design and implementation and the monitoring of the elimination of female genital mutilation;

24. *Acknowledges* that intensifying efforts is urgently needed for the elimination of female genital mutilation, and in this regard also acknowledges the importance of giving the issue due consideration in the efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030;

25. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that all relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, in particular the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the World Health Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Development Programme and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, individually and collectively, take into account the protection and promotion of the rights of women and girls against female genital mutilation in their country programmes, as appropriate and in accordance with national priorities, in order to further strengthen their efforts in this regard;

26. *Renews its request* to the Secretary-General that he submit to the General Assembly, at its seventy-third session, an in-depth multidisciplinary report on the root causes of and factors contributing to the practice of female genital mutilation, its prevalence worldwide and its impact on women and girls, including evidence and data, analysis of progress made to date and action-oriented recommendations for eliminating this practice, on the basis of information provided by Member States, relevant actors of the United Nations system working on the issue and other relevant stakeholders.

65th plenary meeting
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